



Spain

International Religious Freedom Report 2005

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The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. There is no state religion; however, the Catholic Church enjoys some privileges unavailable to other faiths.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationships among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 194,897 square miles, and its population is approximately 43.9 million.

The law prohibits the collection of census data based on religious belief, which limits the ability to compile statistical data on the number of adherents in the country. The Center for Sociological Investigation (CIS), an autonomous state agency, collects statistics on religious trends in the society. In February 2005, a CIS survey reported that 79.3 percent of citizens consider themselves Catholic; however, 47.1 percent stated that they never attend Mass. Among non-Catholics, 11.7 percent said that they were agnostics, 4.9 percent said that they were atheists, and approximately 2 percent said that they practiced other religions.

The Episcopal Conference of Spain (CEE) estimates that there are approximately 34 million Catholics in the country. The director of the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities (FEREDE) stated that FEREDE represents 400,000 evangelical Christians and other Protestants, but estimates that 30 percent of its members are immigrants from Latin America and Africa. FEREDE also estimates that there are 800,000 foreign Protestants, mostly European, who reside in the country at least 6 months of each year. There is little comprehensive information on the Muslim community in the country; and estimates place its size anywhere from 500,000 to 1,000,000. The Federation of Spanish Islamic Entities (FEERI) estimates that there are close to 1 million Muslims, including both legal and illegal immigrants. Recent government estimates support local source reports that there are 40,000 to 50,000 Jews in the country. There are approximately 9,000 practicing Buddhists.

The majority of Muslims are recent immigrants from Morocco, but there are also Algerians, Pakistanis, and immigrants from other Arab or Islamic countries, as well as a number of Spanish converts to Islam. The Ministry of Justice's Office of Religious Affairs notes that although the majority of Muslim immigrants come from Islamic countries, there is also a small number of Christians who emigrated from countries such as Egypt and Lebanon. In April 2005, the National Institute of Statistics reported that immigrants from Morocco were the largest immigrant group in the country. Moroccan nationals represent 13.7 percent of the 3.7 million immigrants in the country. There are 386,958 Moroccans living in the country legally and as many as 120,000 illegal Moroccan immigrants.

Most Orthodox Christians are from Eastern European countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, and the Ukraine. Immigrants who practice evangelical religions tend to come from African and Latin American countries, according to government officials.

The country's largest cities, Madrid and Barcelona, host the largest number of religious confessions, according to Government officials. The last government census taken in 2002 indicated that the largest communities of immigrants from predominantly Islamic countries were located in the autonomous communities of Catalonia,

Andalucia, Madrid, Valencia, Murcia, and the Spanish North African enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. The population of orthodox Christian communities is largest in Aragon and Valencia. The country also hosts a number of foreign missionaries of evangelical Christian, Mormon, Orthodox, Buddhist, and Islamic faiths.

In January 2005, the Register of Religious Entities maintained by the Ministry of Justice listed 12,453 entities created by the Catholic Church. There are 1,388 non-Catholic churches, denominations, and communities in the register, including 1,064 Protestant church entities. Protestant entities include 305 charismatic churches, 128 Assemblies of Brethren, 228 Baptist churches, 125 Pentecostal churches, 38 Presbyterian churches, one Evangelical Church of Philadelphia, 10 Church of Christ churches, one Salvation Army entity, 18 Anglican churches, 63 interdenominational churches, 35 Churches for Attention to Foreigners, 4 Seventh-day Adventist churches, 3 Reformed Adventist churches, and 121 other evangelical churches. In addition there are also 10 Orthodox churches, 4 Churches of Christ, Scientist, one Jehovah's Witnesses entity, 1 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), 1 Unification Church, 10 entities of other Christian confessions, 16 entities of Judaism, 254 entities of Islam, 11 entities of the Baha'i Faith, 3 entities of Hinduism, 21 entities of Buddhism, and 3 entities of other confessions. The Church of Scientology is present in the country, although the Ministry of Justice has declined to register it as a religious organization.

The number of non-Catholic churches and religious communities in the country may be much larger. Some religious groups choose to register as cultural organizations with the regional governments rather than with the national registry of religious entities in Madrid because the national registration process can take up to 6 months and requires much paperwork.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. The Government at all levels strives to protect this right in full and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. Discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs is illegal.

Article 16 of the Constitution provides for religious freedom and the freedom of worship by individuals and groups. It also states, "No faith shall have the character of a state religion." However, the Government provides certain public financing benefits to the Catholic Church that are not available to other religious entities in practice. These benefits derive from four accords signed with the Holy See in 1979. They cover economic, religious education, military, and judicial matters. The Catholic Church receives financing through voluntary tax contributions and direct payments. Taxpayers can select a box on their income tax forms to contribute up to 0.5 percent of their taxes to the Catholic Church. In 2003, taxpayers contributed \$127.2 million (135 million euros) to the Catholic Church. In addition to voluntary taxpayer contributions, the Government provided the Catholic Church an additional \$33.6 million (28 million euros). This sum did not include state funding for religion teachers in public schools, military and hospital chaplains, and other indirect assistance. There will be no updates on public financing of the Catholic Church until 2006.

Representatives of Protestant, Jewish, and Islamic faiths signed bilateral agreements with the Government in 1992. Protestant entities signed the accord as the Federation of Evangelical Religious Entities of Spain (FEREDE); Jewish entities signed as the Federation of Israelite Communities of Spain (FCIE); and Islamic entities signed as the Islamic Commission of Spain (CIE). The CIE is composed of two federations: the FEERI, the Federation of Spanish Islamic Entities, and the UCIDE, the Union of Islamic Communities in Spain. In 2003, the Government expanded the concept of "well-known deeply-rooted" beliefs (notorio arraigo) to allow other religious groups, such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, to sign bilateral agreements. By the end of the period covered by this report, only the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints had been granted notorio arraigo; however, the church has not negotiated a bilateral agreement with the Government.

Some autonomous regions have also signed agreements with religious groups in order to encourage social integration. For example, the Catalanian government has signed agreements with the Islamic Council of Catalonia, and Protestant, Jewish, and Baha'i religious communities. These agreements were social rather than financial in nature and were intended to encourage social integration.

National religious holidays include Epiphany (January 6), Holy Thursday and Good Friday, Assumption (August 15), All Saints' Day (November 1), Immaculate Conception (December 8), and Christmas (December 25); some communities celebrate local religious holidays. National religious holidays do not have a negative effect on other religious groups. In the 1992 cooperation accords with the FCIE and CIE, the Government agreed to recognize Jewish and Muslim holidays. The 1992 accord with FEREDE accommodates Protestant entities, such as the Seventh-day Adventists, that celebrate Saturday as the Sabbath, by giving them Friday afternoon off from work with pay to prepare for the Sabbath.

The Law of Religious Freedom of 1980 implements the constitutional provision for freedom of religion. The 1980 law establishes a legal regime and certain privileges for religious organizations. To enjoy the benefits of this regime, religious organizations must be entered in the Register of Religious Entities maintained by the Office of Religious Affairs of the Ministry of Justice, which is updated regularly. To register with the Ministry of Justice, religious groups must submit documentation supporting their claim to be religions. If a group's application is rejected, it may appeal the decision to the courts. If it is judged not to be a religion, it may be included on a Register of Associations maintained by the Ministry of Interior. Inclusion on the Register of Associations grants legal status as authorized by the law regulating the right of association. Religions not officially recognized are treated as cultural associations.

The Church of Scientology has been refused registration as a religious entity in the country since it first applied in 1983. The decision to deny registration was upheld by a Supreme Court decision in 1990. An organization claiming to be affiliated with the Church of Scientology filed an application to register with the Ministry of Justice in 1983. The Justice Ministry also rejected this application. Following a 2001 decision by the Constitutional Court to register the Unification Church, and following the opening of a new national Church of Scientology of Spain, the Church filed an application again in October 2004. However, the Government denied the application in May 2005 and declined to register the Church on the grounds that the Ministry of Justice did not have the authority to overturn the 1990 decision of the Supreme Court through an administrative action. The Church has filed a Notice of Appeal to this denial.

Officials of the Church of Scientology argue that the organization that filed the 1983 application was not affiliated with the Church of Scientology. They also argue that the 1990 decision was based on provisions of law, overturned in a 2001 Constitutional Court decision, that a religion must worship a supreme being. Church officials argue that under the decision of the Constitutional Court, the Church should be registered. Ministry of Justice officials hold that the 2001 decision applied only to the Unification Church, and that the Church of Scientology must pursue the case through the court system. The Office of Religious Affairs found that the Church of Scientology held the same doctrine, organizational structure, and leadership as the organization that applied in 1983 and was denied registration at that time. Authorities declared that the Government would not interfere in any way with the activities of the Church of Scientology.

The first section of the Register of Religious Entities, called the "special section," contains a list of religious entities created by the Catholic Church, and a list of non-Catholic churches, denominations, and communities that have an agreement on cooperation with the State. Catholic dioceses and parishes are not required to register to gain benefits under the 1980 law. However, Catholic monasteries, religious communities, associations, and foundations may voluntarily register to participate in the legal regime.

In 2004, leaders of the Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish communities discussed the issue of expanded tax benefits and public funding, the opening of new places of worship, and the quality of religious education with the Office of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Justice; in particular, they sought public financing comparable to that enjoyed by the Catholic Church. All religious minority groups requested the Government to revise the national income tax form to allow taxpayers the option to donate a percentage of their taxes to non-Catholic entities. However, these negotiations ended without an agreement between the Government and religious leaders. In general, the Government places no legal restrictions on opening new places of worship; however, representatives of minority religious groups sometimes have difficulty opening places of worship, most frequently because of resistance from neighborhood groups.

Muslim and Protestant leaders also have called for the Government to provide more support for public religious education in their respective faiths. In 2004, the Government responded to these calls by approving legislation that provides funding for teachers of courses in Catholic, Islamic, evangelical/Christian, and Judaic studies in public school classes of 10 or more students. These courses are not mandatory. Those students who do not elect to take confessional courses are obliged to take an alternative course covering general social, cultural, and religious themes.

In 2004, the Government set aside funds to pay for 20 Muslim teachers to teach courses on Islam to public school students in Madrid, Catalonia, Andalusia, and Valencia. The Government required that the teachers hold degrees from a Spanish university, have training in Spanish law, and be fluent in Spanish. As of the end of the period covered by this report, courses on Islam were not yet being offered because government officials and members of the Islamic Commission of Spain had not selected Muslim teachers who met the qualifications.

There are religious schools for Catholic, Protestant, Muslim, and Jewish students. There are no restrictions placed on parents who want to provide their children religious home school training or enroll them in private religious schools.

The Government has taken steps to promote interfaith understanding through the support or sponsorship of programs on interfaith dialogue. Members of all religious faiths serve as members of a government Committee of Advisors on Religious Freedom. On March 25, 2005, the Government participated in an interreligious seminar on "Religious Pluralism and Coexistence" in Madrid. It also sponsors university courses and seminars with representatives of different religious confessions. In 2005, the government held inter-religious roundtables at the University Menendez Pelayo of Santander and the University of Madrid. On June 8-9, 2005, the Government hosted a conference in Cordoba under the auspices of the Organization for European Security Cooperation on Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance. The conference included representatives of all religious faiths as well as international experts on the subject of religious freedom. Government officials placed great emphasis specifically on the issue of anti-Semitism in the country and expressed interest in maintaining a regular dialogue with the U.S. Government on anti-Semitic activity in the country. The Government also appointed a special envoy to serve as a liaison between the Jewish community and international organizations dedicated to combating anti-Semitism in Europe, such as the forum for International Cooperation on Holocaust, Education, Remembrance, and Research in Warsaw.

Restrictions on Freedom of Religion

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

The Islamic and Protestant Federations continued to report that the building permit process for new mosque construction can be difficult and lengthy, especially for building sites in central urban locations. According to FEERI, new mosque construction sometimes was forced into less-visible suburban areas, primarily because of resistance from neighborhood groups. However, in 2003, the construction of a large and prominent mosque was completed in Granada. FEERI reported that female Muslim students who wear headscarves had not encountered problems with school dress codes. The Government has consistently held that the right to education takes priority over the enforcement of clothing regulations.

The Government funds Catholic chaplains for the military, prisons, and hospitals. The 1992 bilateral agreements recognize the right of Protestant and Muslim members of the armed forces to have access to religious services, subject to the needs of the service and authorization by their superiors. According to the agreements, such services are to be provided by ministers and imams approved by the religious federations and authorized by the military command. However, Protestant and Muslim leaders continued to report that there are no military regulations to implement the 1992 agreements. FERDE reported that evangelical military service personnel must leave their barracks to access chaplains and participate in evangelical religious services. Muslim leaders report that prison officials generally provide access for imams to visit Muslim prisoners, but officials have not granted permission for imams to hold religious services on prison grounds.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

There were no reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations during the period covered by this report.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

The generally amicable relationships among religions in society contributed to religious freedom. The growth of the country's immigrant population has at times led to social friction, which in isolated instances has had a religious component. Many citizens blame recent Moroccan immigrants for increased crime rates in the country. These beliefs sometimes result in anti-Muslim sentiment. There was no documented increase in violence toward Muslims following the March 2004 terrorist train bombings in Madrid. Muslim leaders have stated that Islamic communities continued to suffer from discrimination, particularly in obtaining employment and rental housing. They were

concerned that media reports appeared to link Islam to the terrorist attacks. In February 2005, Sigma Dos, a private polling agency, conducted a national survey of 1000 individuals on attitudes on the Muslim population in the country. The poll revealed that 70 percent of those who responded had had no contact with Muslims, and 48 percent stated they knew almost nothing about Islam or Muslims. Nevertheless, some 43 percent of respondents said the greatest threat of the presence of Muslims in the country was the possibility that fundamentalists would carry out a terrorist attack.

As in past years, in 2004 there were some reports of vandalism to Jewish community institutions in Barcelona, Toledo, and in Melilla. Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, has an estimated population of 4,000 Jewish residents. A group of individuals painted anti-Semitic slogans in German on the walls of the ATID (Hebrew for "Future") community center and the Sephardi School in October 2004 in Barcelona. Following these incidents, the Catalan regional government temporarily provided additional security for community center and the school. In August 2004, unidentified persons defaced with red swastikas a statue in front of the El Transito Synagogue in Toledo. The local government later removed the graffiti and deployed local police to provide additional protection of Jewish historical sites. On a Jewish holy day in August 2004, local youth attacked a synagogue in Melilla with stones as worshippers celebrated the Prayer of Shabbat. No arrests were made in the incident. The Ministry of Justice expressed its concern about incidents of anti-Semitism, stating that these incidents appear to be isolated events attributed mostly to small groups of youth or immigrants.

Jewish community leaders also cited some incidents of anti-Semitic propaganda in the media and in local government institutions. The Catalan newspaper El Periodico de Catalunya published an article in November 2004 that described the deaths of Palestinians in the Middle East as acts of "extermination" by Israeli authorities. During the same month, a Star of David appeared placed side-by-side with swastika on a City Hall webpage in Barcelona. City officials removed the symbols without explaining why they were placed there or apologizing for the incident. Also in November 2004, in the region of Galicia in the northern part of the country, the mayor of the town of Oleiros approved public signs that described the Israeli Prime Minister as an "animal" and labeled members of his government "neo-Nazis." The Government responded by issuing a strong statement condemning the incident. The mayor later agreed to remove the signs.

Two Jewish synagogues in Barcelona belonging to the Jewish community of Barcelona and the ATID Jewish community were vandalized at various times in recent years and again in March 2005. The vandalism included anti-Semitic graffiti on the walls of the synagogue. The groups also reported their belief that local extremist groups monitored them. The regional government responded by increasing security at the center.

In October 2004, partly in response to attacks against Jewish persons and institutions, the Council of Ministers approved a proposal from the Ministry of Justice calling for a Foundation for Pluralism and Coexistence. In December 2004, the Government designated January 27 as Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Embassy officials also meet with religious leaders of various denominations.

The Embassy has facilitated exchanges between U.S. and local religious associations to foster dialogue and promote religious tolerance. The Embassy in Madrid and the Consulate in Barcelona have organized a Muslim outreach group to coordinate and promote increased contact with the Islamic community. This included inviting Islamic community leaders to special events, organized by the Embassy's U.S. Citizen Diplomat Program, and hosting meetings between Embassy officials and Muslim leaders. The Embassy has also met government officials to discuss attempts by the Church of Scientology to register.

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[International Religious Freedom Report 2005](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/51582.htm)